The Yakuts are very fond of eloquence. The ability to make a good speech at a meeting is highly regarded, and the speaker is greeted with cries of approval.

With regard to the songs (yrya), the melodies are simple and monotonous, but there are different genres, and the images are often artistic. It is possible to sing love songs (for girls and boys), dance songs, humorous songs, shaman songs, and so on, as well as improvisations, when a person tells in song what he has been doing or seeing. The motif of this kind of song is very simple and usually consists of two or three repeated notes.

The Yakuts did not have any other kind of music, apart from vocal. There were no musical instruments, leaving aside the shaman tambourine and the khomus, a small iron jew's-harp known to more or less all the peoples of the Old World.

The dances of the Yakuts are very original. Particularly interesting is a round called the *ohyaraa*, performed during festivals.

The dancers stand in a circle arm in arm and in time to the singing move with majestic steps to the left, in the direction of movement of the sun. There were variations of this dance in different localities. There were also various dancing games.

Ornamental art attained a high level of development among the Yakuts. The carving of wood and mammoth ivory; the casting and stamping of silver, copper and gold; the embroidery and appliqué of leather and fabric; fur appliqué and mosaic; the weaving of horsehair: all these were arts performed with materials available to the Yakuts and in which the craftsmen showed particular artistic taste and skill. Basically there was no graphic art for other than decorative purposes among the Yakuts, just as in the folk art of the past as a whole, if we disregard the animal, and human figures made by the shamans, and the later carved sculpture made in imitation of Russian examples.

The style of the Yakut design was original, although it contained Tungus, Mongol and other elements. Geometric motifs predominated, at times rather intricate ones. On the carved wooden vessels we find circular designs consisting of straight, serrated and wavy lines with points, dashes and so on, covering almost the entire surface. In the stamping, casting and birchbark carving, there predominate symmetrical, rounded figures, such as hooks, meanders, pincer-shapes, and so on, with linear squares, concentric circles and so forth. Very typical is a design found on scoops and saddlecloths; here one is struck by the central two-horned lyre—a purely Yakut motif.

The darkening of silver, and the painting of wood and alder with a concoction of alder, were developed.

In the selection of colors, preference was shown for black, red and, to some extent yellow and blue. The same preference was shown in the selection of fabric of the appropriate color.

* * *

Such was the culture of the Yakut people up to the October Revolution.

Particularly important was the cultural assistance which the Yakuts obtained from the fraternal Russian people during the prerevolutionary years. In the 19th century it was mainly the political exiles, beginning with the Decembrists, who spread culture through Yakutiya. There were also other progressive Russian people who diffused the beginnings of a cultivated way of life among the Yakuts. In particular, they laid the foundations of the Yakut written language.